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Prevention of armed conflict

Protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their implications for international peace, security and development

Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance

Security Council
Sixty-seventh year

Letter dated 29 October 2012 from the Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter by Mr. Karen Mirzoyan, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic, addressed to you (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 33, 34 and 70, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Garen **Nazarian**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* Reissued for technical reasons on 12 November 2012.

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Annex to the letter dated 29 October 2012 from the Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Letter by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic

I am writing to communicate the position of my Government regarding the issue of the rehabilitation of the Stepanakert airport and in response to the groundless allegations of the representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations contained in a document circulated on 11 October 2012 (A/67/507-S/2012/754).

I feel compelled to provide certain clarifications with regard to the fraudulent campaign of Azerbaijan aimed at misleading the international community and justifying its policy of using force or the threat of force against the people of Nagorno Karabakh.

Since the declaration of its independence, following the free expression of popular will, the Nagorno Karabakh Republic has been building its statehood based on democratic values, the rule of law, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. The independence of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic withstood the military aggression of Azerbaijan and, since the ceasefire agreement of 1994, the Nagorno Karabakh Republic has been fully and effectively controlling its territory, including the airspace.

The rehabilitation of the Stepanakert airport is the sovereign right of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic and pursues solely civilian and humanitarian objectives, including the realization of such a basic human right as the freedom of movement.

The freedom of movement of the civilian population of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic, alongside other human rights outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other core international instruments, have already been continuously and vehemently undermined by the ongoing Azerbaijani blockade.

The position of Azerbaijan, which openly declares its aim to fully blockade the Nagorno Karabakh Republic and the Republic of Armenia, runs counter to the Security Council resolutions referred to in the communication of the Azeri delegation. The stance of Azerbaijan is a clear manifestation of its outright disregard for human rights and fundamental freedoms as a continuation of its policy of the collective punishment of the civilian population.

The bellicose rhetoric and threats to shoot down civil aircraft in particular, voiced by the high-ranking Azeri officials, are in material breach of its international obligations and contradict the provisions of the Convention on International Civil Aviation.

Such threats, along with the statements on the highest level declaring all the Armenians of the world as enemy number one of Azerbaijan, are a vivid example of the long-established anti-Armenian hysteria and xenophobia of its state policy. The pardon and nationwide glorification of Ramil Safarov, Azerbaijani officer, who was convicted of and sentenced to life imprisonment in Hungary for perpetrating a brutal hate crime, a manslaughter, is the most shocking recent manifestation of that policy.

In this context, my Government considers the steps taken by the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan, in particular declarations on undertaking "all necessary measures" in order to prevent the functioning of the Stepanakert airport along with previous threats to shoot down civil planes, as irresponsible and politically charged actions.

The stance of Azerbaijan clearly violates the basic principles of international civil aviation. Moreover, it runs counter to the commitments undertaken voluntarily by Azerbaijan in the framework of the negotiation process mediated by the States serving as Co-Chairs of the Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, namely France, the Russian Federation and the United States of America. On 13 July 2012, the Co-Chairs stated that, regarding reports of the planned opening of an airport in Nagorno-Karabakh, they had received renewed assurances from the sides that they would reject any threat or use of force against civil aircraft, pursue the matter through diplomatic steps and refrain from politicizing the issue.

The authorities of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic are committed to operating the Stepanakert airport in full compliance with the aims and objectives of the Convention on International Civil Aviation, including but not limited to meeting the needs of the peoples of the world for safe, regular, efficient and economical air transport; insuring the safe and orderly growth of international civil aviation throughout the world; encouraging the development of airways, airports, and air navigation facilities for international civil aviation; promoting safety of flight in international air navigation; and promoting generally the development of all aspects of international civil aeronautics.

I therefore count on your assistance, Mr. Secretary-General, and that of the United Nations and its specialized agencies, as well as all peace-loving Member States, in the rehabilitation of the Stepanakert airport in order to ensure that the people of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic are able to exercise their basic human rights and fundamental freedoms.

I strongly believe that the rehabilitation of the Stepanakert airport will contribute to the realization of the aims and objectives of the Convention on International Civil Aviation. It may also serve as a confidence-building measure contributing towards progress in the negotiation process under the auspices of the Minsk Group Co-Chairs.

(*Signed*) Karen **Mirzoyan**